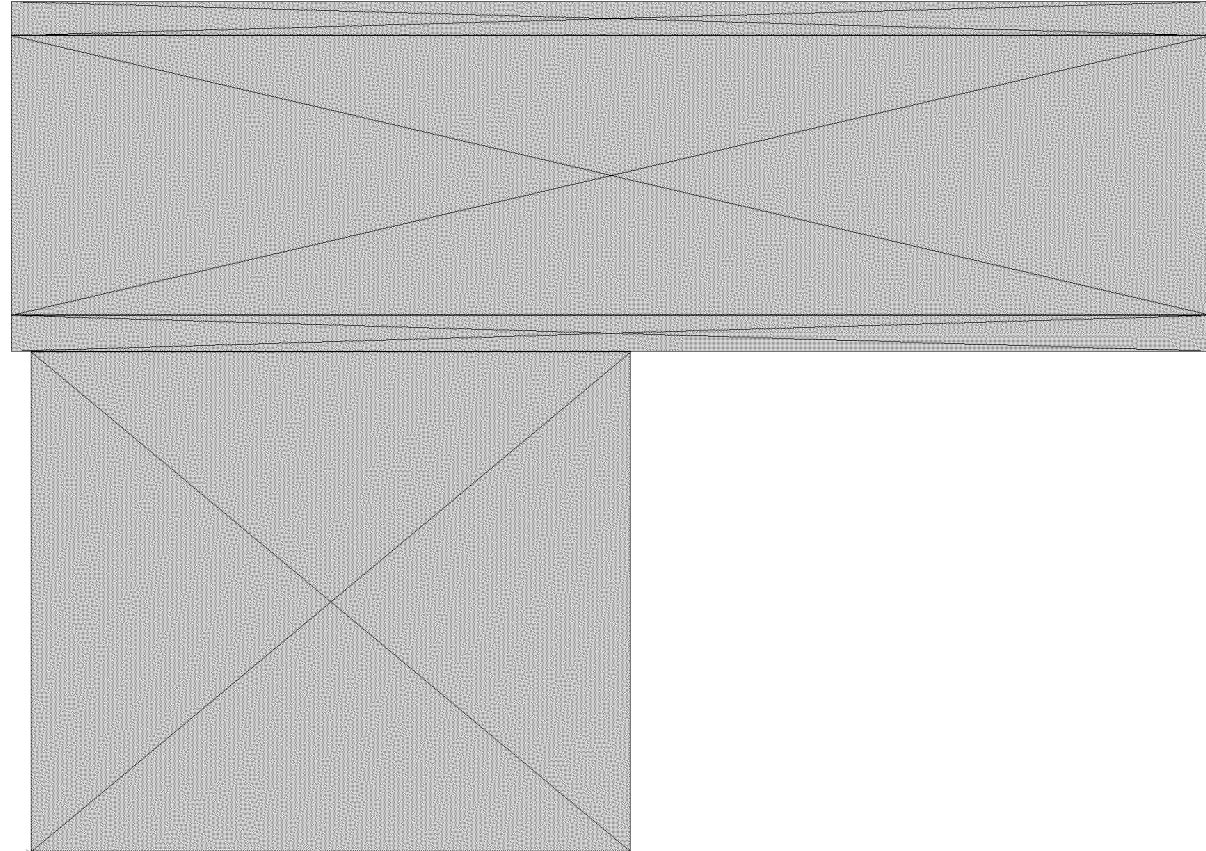


**To:** Stavnes, Sandra[Stavnes.Sandra@epa.gov]  
**From:** EnergyGuardian  
**Sent:** Thur 8/13/2015 11:22:13 AM  
**Subject:** Report on fracking chemicals in California touches off firestorm

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Energy and environment headlines for the morning of Thursday, August 13, 2015



## Report on fracking chemicals in California touches off firestorm

By Kevin Rogers

An [analysis](#) published Wednesday by the Environmental Working Group found that hydraulic fracturing operations across California used a total of 197 unique chemicals, some of which are considered carcinogenic by regulators.

The report drew fire from drillers, who accused EWG of "fear mongering" and highlighted the stringent regulatory system on fracking in the state.

The analysis examined chemicals, as reported by drillers to the state, used in 691 oil wells from December 2013 to February 2015. Drillers generally used more than 24 different chemicals, more than double the national average. Fracking fluid consists of water, sand and chemical mixtures that vary from operation to operation.

Of those 197 chemicals, EWG found that 15 have been listed by California's Proposition 65, which requires the state to list chemicals linked to cancer or reproductive damage, and 25 were likely to contain impurities of Proposition 65 chemicals. Among those are the petroleum distillates benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene and xylene, the report said.

"Fracking is inherently problematic because of the chemicals used in the fluid," said Tasha Stoiber, an EWG scientist who co-authored the report. "Since California has one of the most comprehensive and transparent disclosure programs in the nation, it's the best window we have on the specific chemicals drillers are injecting into the ground."

California's regulatory regime requires drillers to submit all chemicals used in fracking to the Department of Conservation, regardless of "trade secret" considerations. The agency has yet to review the report and declined comment.

The report called on California's regulators, in the absence of a complete ban on fracking, to identify potential alternatives to replace the "toxic" chemicals; prohibit the injection of wastewater near likely sources of drinking and farming water; and support a system of groundwater monitoring near oil and gas sites.

"California leads the nation when it comes to providing more information about fracking chemicals to the public," Bill Allayaud, EWG's California director of government affairs and co-author of the report, said in a statement. "But full disclosure is only the first step. Now it's time for state officials to act aggressively to make sure these hazardous substances don't jeopardize human and environmental health."

Energy In Depth, a campaign run by the Independent Petroleum Association of America, criticized the report for overstating the risks and packaging publicly available information as something frightening.

"This report is simple fear-mongering. It takes information that has been available to the public for years and attaches new labels to it to try to scare Californians about chemicals used in the fracking process," California Director Dave Quast said in an email.

"However, the authors ignore the conclusions of countless studies—including studies from the EPA and the independent California Council on Science and Technology that have been released in just the past two months—that confirm that fracking doesn't pose a serious risk to groundwater," he continued.

The Environmental Protection Agency, in its analysis of hydraulic fracturing's impact on groundwater, found that the practice has yielded no "widespread, systemic impacts on

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drinking water.” That report, however, noted that mishandling across the lifetime of fracking fluid could lead to groundwater contamination, and a small number of cases have been documented.

Upper Hull, vice president of strategic communications of the Western States Petroleum Association, said the EWG report was “politically motivated” and highlighted California’s strong regulations on fracking.

“These chemicals are highly regulated, how they’re used is highly regulated, and to date, no one, including the Environmental Working Group, has ever identified any situation or case that these chemicals have harmed the environment or water supplies or anything else,” he said. “The fact that chemicals are used is well known. What is perhaps not adequately discussed here is how safely they’re used in California and how regulated they are in California.”

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## **Damages in Colorado mine spill will take years to tabulate**

**By Matthew Brown and P. Solomon Banda**

DURANGO, Colorado (AP) — The spill of toxic wastewater from an abandoned gold mine high in Colorado's San Juan Mountains caused untold millions in economic disruptions and damages in three states — to rafting companies, Native American farmers unable to irrigate, municipal water systems and possibly water well owners. And largely because the federal government inadvertently triggered the release, it has vowed to pay the bill.

That bill could be years in the making. Attorneys general from Colorado, New Mexico and Utah vowed to ensure citizens and towns are compensated for immediate and long-term damages from the spill. But Colorado's attorney general, Cynthia Coffman, acknowledged it could be years before the full impact is known.

"We have to be vigilant as attorneys general, as the lawyers for the state, as protectors of the environment, to be sure that the assurances that we received today from the Environmental Protection Agency are the same in two years, in five years, even 10 years when we discover what the damage to the environment actually is," Coffman said Wednesday after she and her counterparts gathered in Durango.

EPA administrator Gina McCarthy said her agency took full responsibility for the spill, which was unleashed Aug. 5 when an EPA-supervised crew accidentally unleashed the torrent of wastewater from the Gold King mine. The plume of heavy metals, including arsenic and lead, flowed into southwest Colorado's Animas River and into the San Juan River in New Mexico.

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## **Israel reaches deal on natural gas development**

**By The Associated Press**

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel says it has reached an agreement with developers on a regulatory framework for its natural gas reserves.

The agreement comes after months of squabbling that began last year when Israel's antitrust commissioner considered designating the American-Israeli partnership that is developing the gas a monopoly.

The deal sets a price ceiling for future sales to Israeli companies and commits the gas firms to complete the development of the country's largest gas field, known as Leviathan, by 2020.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed the agreement at a press conference on Thursday. The deal will be brought to a Cabinet vote on Sunday.

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## **Hanford whistleblower settles for \$4.1 million**

**By Nicholas K. Geranios**

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A whistleblower on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation has reached a \$4.1 million settlement with his former employer on the former nuclear weapons production site in Washington state, his lawyer said Wednesday.

Walter Tamosaitis was a former manager at Hanford's Waste Treatment Plant, where he worked for subcontractor URS, Inc., which is now known as AECOM.

He was removed from his position in 2010 after raising safety concerns about the construction of the giant plant. He was eventually fired in 2013.

AECOM, which acquired URS last October, said it reached the settlement to avoid the cost of litigation.

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## **Los Angeles covers reservoirs with 'shade balls' to meet EPA water standards**

**By The Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles has been blackballed.

The city has completed a program of covering open-air reservoirs with floating "shade balls" to protect water quality.

That prevents chemical reactions that can cause algae blooms and other problems, allowing the Department of Water and Power to meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency water-quality requirements.

They have the added perk of aiding with the ravages of the drought, and are expected to keep about 300 million gallons annually from evaporating.

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## **Deutsche Bank employees charged in emissions trading case**

**By The Associated Press**

BERLIN (AP) — German prosecutors have filed tax evasion charges against eight current and former Deutsche Bank employees over their alleged participation in a value-added tax fraud scheme involving carbon dioxide emissions certificates.

Frankfurt prosecutors said Thursday that the eight — seven of whom are still employed by the bank — are accused of being involved in the scheme between September 2009 and February 2010.

In four to six cases, they allegedly caused employees at the bank's tax department to file incorrect VAT notifications and as a result evaded tax totaling 220 million euros (\$245 million), prosecutors said.

Prosecutors did not identify the suspects, but said they are aged between 33 and 64. They include two account managers, a commodities trader, a tax department employee and a former manager in whose department the emissions certificate trading took place.

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### **A message from the American Petroleum Institute**

**America is now the world's #1 natural gas producer and will soon be #1 in oil. Now more than ever, abundant energy means abundant prosperity, opportunity and security for all Americans.**

[Learn more at EnergyTomorrow.org](http://EnergyTomorrow.org)

## **New Zealand's largest coal miner enters managed bankruptcy**

**By Nick Perry**

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand's largest coal miner was forced into a managed bankruptcy Thursday due to a steep fall in coal prices over several years.

Government-owned Solid Energy announced it was placing itself into voluntary administration, a process it hopes will allow it to keep trading as it tries to sell its assets. Whether any of its coal operations remain viable will be up to any potential buyers to decide.

The company employs 540 staff directly and another 200 contractors. At its peak, it was mining more than 4 million metric tons of coal each year, about 70 percent of which was used for making steel.

The company said its large debt was exacerbated by a drop in the price for hard coking coal from over \$300 per metric ton in 2011 to about \$85 this year. Contributing to the fall has been China's slowing growth, some U.S. utilities switching to natural gas, and a glut of supply.

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## **Lower death toll from Mexican gas pipeline blast**

**By The Associated Press**

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A deadly gas pipeline explosion in northern Mexico was caused by construction workers who hit the pipe with excavating machinery, the state oil company said Wednesday.

The federal National Agency for Industrial Safety reported that four people died in the blast late Tuesday and said it was investigating what happened. Previously, officials had given a death toll of five.

The state oil company, Petroleos Mexicanos, said the dead were working on a construction project near the city of Monterrey that had nothing to do with Pemex. The explosion sparked a fire fueled by gas remaining in the pipeline.

Gas pipelines in Mexico are often poorly marked and such accidents are not uncommon.

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## **Shipper Moller-Maersk satisfied with lower profit as**

## **oil prices plummet**

**By The Associated Press**

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Denmark's shipping and oil group A.P. Moller-Maersk says has reaffirmed its full-year outlook after delivering what it called "a satisfactory result" in the second quarter despite lower average container rates and a lower oil price.

Overall profit dropped to \$1.09 billion in the three-month period that ended June 30, from \$2.3 billion. Revenue fell to \$10.5 billion, down from \$12 billion in the same period last year.

The Copenhagen-based group said Thursday it expects an underlying result for 2015 of around \$4.0 billion, and reiterated that its strategy was "to become a premium conglomerate."

Earlier this year, Maersk ordered nearly 30 container ships as part of its \$15 billion investment program to meet growing demand for shipping and to replace less efficient vessels.

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## **Divers search for missing as oil rig chopper crashes in Nigeria**

**By Michelle Faul**

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — Nigerian Navy divers will help search Thursday for two people missing when a helicopter flying from an offshore oil rig crashed into a lagoon in the Nigerian commercial capital of Lagos, a rescue official said.

Rescuers recovered four bodies on Wednesday from the crash of a U.S.-made Sikorsky S-76C+ belonging to the Houston, Texas-based Bristow Group.

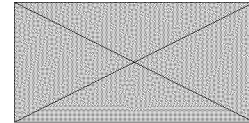
Six injured people from the chopper are "responding to treatment" in the hospitals, according to spokesman Ibrahim Farinloye of the National Emergency Management Agency.

"We are deploying navy divers to join us in the recovery" of two people missing in the accident, Farinloye told The Associated Press on Thursday.

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## **Week in Review - Clean Power Plan rolls out amid charges of collusion**

Meanwhile, power plant emissions hit 27-year low.

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## **Drillers' efficiency can make Bakken oil profitable at \$30 a barrel**

Drillers cutting costs and tapping into bigger wells in the Bakken Shale can make money even if oil drops below \$30 a barrel, according to a Bloomberg Intelligence analysis.

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## **Petrochemical industry could be hit if oil prices fail to recover**

An IHS report released Wednesday said plentiful ethane has helped fuel a boom in the petrochemical industry along the Gulf Coast, but that could be jeopardized by continued low oil prices, FuelFix reports.

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## **California utility regulator eyes reforms to end secrecy**

The California Public Utilities Commission, under fire for the way it handles relations with the utilities it regulates, has opened public hearings on reforming its practices, the Los Angeles Times reports.

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## **US funded power plant in Afghanistan barely used**

A government watchdog warns a \$335 million power plant in Afghanistan funded by U.S. taxpayers is operating at less than 1 percent of capacity and is falling into disrepair, The Washington Times reports.

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## **Oil gains on inventories, demand predictions; Brent over \$50**

International Energy Agency predictions of increased demand for oil combined with a drop in U.S. inventories to boost oil prices early Thursday. West Texas Intermediate crude gained 19 cents to \$43.49 a barrel in electronic trading on the Nymex, while in London Brent rose \$1.02 higher to \$50.68, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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## **UK government seeks fast track on fracking decisions**

Local governments would have to decide on applications to drill for shale gas within 16 weeks, under measures announced by the British government Thursday, The Guardian reports.

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## **Warming Pacific temps signal El Nino, drought relief**

In another sign that a strong El Nino weather pattern is on the way – potentially easing California’s drought – the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center has recorded benchmark Pacific Ocean temperatures increased to 3.4 degrees Fahrenheit above average, the Los Angeles Times reports.

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## **Bakken strike force helps with drug arrests**

North Dakota officials credit the Bakken Organized Crime Strike Force with a key role in busting a drug trafficking ring in the oil-boom region, the Grand Forks Herald reports.

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## **Catholic fossil fuel investments at odds with papal climate view**

Fossil fuel holdings by Catholic organizations in the U.S. contrast with the encyclical issued by Pope Francis warning against the dangers of climate change, Reuters reports, noting that some, like the Archdiocese of Chicago, are re-examining their investments.

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## **Arctic drilling at odds with climate fight, say environmentalists**

A report from Greenpeace and Oil Change International maintains that Shell’s new drilling in the Arctic Ocean conflicts with the Obama administration’s efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions and fight climate change, FuelFix reports.

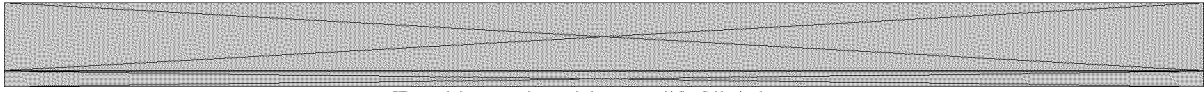
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## **Upcoming Events**

- Aug. 13, Washington: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to hold a teleconference to update its forecast on El Nino. Mike Halpert, deputy director of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. Dial-in: 800-475-4971. Passcode: NOAA. 12:00 pm
- Aug. 13, Washington: The Heritage Foundation to hold a panel discussion on the Iran

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nuclear deal and its impact on international sanctions. 10:00 am , Heritage Foundation,  
Lehrman Auditorium, 214 Massachusetts Ave. NE.



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